

California State Senate

CAPITOL OFFICE
STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 4032
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
TEL (916) 445-1353
FAX (916) 324-4823

DISTRICT OFFICE
10951 WEST PICO BLVD., SUITE 202
LOS ANGELES, CA 90064
TEL (310) 441-9084
FAX (310) 441-0724

SENATOR
SHEILA JAMES KUEHL
TWENTY-THIRD SENATORIAL DISTRICT
CHAIR
NATURAL RESOURCES AND WILDLIFE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE AND WATER
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SB 180 (Kuehl) The Human Trafficking Collaboration and Training Act

SB 180 establishes, for the first time, a statewide response to human trafficking. It creates the California Alliance to Combat Trafficking and Slavery (California ACTS) Task Force and provides much-needed training opportunities on human trafficking for peace officers and health care providers.

Background on Human Trafficking. Every ten minutes, a man, woman, or child is recruited, kidnapped, or smuggled into the United States to work as a modern-day slave. A victim of human trafficking is anyone who is being manipulated or forced to work against his or her will or provide services for the benefit of someone else.

The U.S. State Department's Trafficking-in-Persons Report estimates that approximately 600,000 to 800,000 people each year are traded against their will to work in one or more forms of servitude. The United States government estimates that 14,500-17,500 women and children are trafficked each year into the United States, primarily from Latin America, countries of the former Soviet Union and Southeast Asia. This figure is likely to be conservative since many cases are never discovered by law enforcement.

Victims of trafficking come from many different ethnic, racial, and age groups. A September 2004 UC Berkeley report entitled, *Hidden Slaves, Forced Labor in the United States*, found that forced labor is prevalent in five sectors of the U.S. economy: prostitution and sex services (46%), domestic service (27%), agriculture (10%), sweatshop/factory (5%), and hotel work (4%). These statistics, however, do not necessarily paint an accurate picture of the types of trafficking that occur in the United States because many studies rely on media and government reports, which do not capture the nature and extent of the problem and its manifestations.

Human Trafficking in California. California, by virtue of its large manufacturing and service sector industries, global economic strength, and large immigrant population, is a major destination for human trafficking. Ten years ago, Californians were shocked with the discovery in El Monte (Los Angeles County) of 72 Thai garment workers being held in what amounted to indentured servitude -- working 17 hours a day, forced to live in inhumane conditions, and

earning as little as 70 cents an hour. The Manasurangkun case received widespread media attention for the sweatshop conditions in which the garment workers worked. The fact that these individuals had been trafficked, however, was not widely recognized at the time. Public awareness of human trafficking, while still relatively modest, has increased in the past decade. A handful of community-based organizations across the state now provide services to victims and law enforcement is beginning to address the issue.

Local jurisdictions have only recently begun to address human trafficking. Local task forces have been created in the city of Los Angeles, the County of San Diego, and the San Francisco Bay Area with US Department of Justice Grants. In addition, a task force has been created in Orange County with local resources. These local task forces bring law enforcement and victim and social service providers together to identify human trafficking victims and bring perpetrators to justice. **Currently no state efforts exist to combat human trafficking and provide services to victims.**

What SB 180 Does

Establishes statewide coordination. While some efforts are being made in local communities to prosecute traffickers and provide services and protection to victims, they remain inadequate. Human trafficking has not been on the state's radar screen and as a result, state agencies are doing little or nothing to address the problem. *SB 180 creates the California Alliance to Combat Trafficking and Slavery (California ACTS) Task Force to bring together relevant state agencies, law enforcement, and service providers to address issues of data collection, victim protection and services, prosecution of traffickers, and increasing public awareness of the issue.*

Training of health care providers. Human trafficking is without question a health care issue. Victims of trafficking suffer a host of health-related problems and are at high risk of injury, illness and even death from the circumstances of their forced employment. In addition, many victims are likely to show up at a hospital or clinic for care. A forthcoming report from the Family Violence Prevention Fund entitled *Turning Pain into Power: Trafficking Survivors' Perspectives on Early Intervention Strategies* highlights the fact that the health care system is an ideal place to focus education and intervention efforts on victims of trafficking. The report recommends that health care providers be trained to help them screen and identify patients and improve their response to victims of trafficking. *SB 180 calls on the California Medical Training Center to create a standardized medical curriculum and training program for health care providers in California.*

Training of peace officers. Proper law enforcement training is essential for successful detection, investigation, and prosecution of human trafficking cases. *SB 180 asks the Commission on Peace Officer Standards Training (POST) to implement training on human trafficking for peace officers in California.*

For more information, contact Tam Ma in the Office of Senator Sheila Kuehl at (916) 651-4482.